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RUSSIA AND THE RUSSIANS
Commercial Club of Cincinnati, Ohio,
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I. Introduction

When I returned from Russia three and one-half years ago - spoke many times. Circumstances different. Then: My own memories fresh. Had that peculiar sort of enthusiasm for subject which people have who are privileged to devote themselves for long time to oneparticular thing. People also were intensely interested, and badly needed information. Damage done by wartime idealization of Soviet regime was beginning to wear off. People were disillusioned, and that disillusionment turning into worry. Did this mean war? We had been assured by our own leaders that no world peace was possible without collaboration with Russians. "Collaboration" had come to have mystic, romantic significance. Now it was realized, suddenly, that we could not have it. Everywhere, I found worried people sitting around with heads in hands, saying: "We see it now. Collaboration is impossible. Therefore war is inevitable. It was this which I and others who had been in Moscow had tried to combat. We were fully aware

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aware of ugliness of problem. But some of us had been living with it for about twenty years. It was not appreciably uglier than before war. We knew there was a chance you could live with it, if you were firm and careful and watched your step.

This was what I was trying to say in X article. My friend W.L. has criticized me frequently and exhaustively because he interpreted the article as a plea for some sort of military containment; having set up that straw-man, he periodically knocks it down, by saying you can't be strong everywhere. I had no such intent. Merely meant to say: you should not despair. No need for panic. There was chance I repeat that you could continue to handle situation without catastrophe. In this, I had in mind: need for reconstruction; dogma which rejects outright attack; law of change (actors making for extreme military threat abnormal).

Today, things quite changed:

1. I, myself, have been engaged not just with Russian matters but wit[illegible]y of policy. Harder to deal with friends than with enemies. This our own attention has been diverted.

2. Public

2. Public opinion has changed. Few people have any further illusions.

Nevertheless, it is well worthwhile to spend an evening talking about Russia.

1. Last couple of years have been period of quiet. Russians need most watching at such time.

2. Public should not relax its efforts to improve understanding of Russian problem. We will never understand it entirely. We should not confuse it with total problem. But Soviet regime remains greatest single enemy of western civilization: an enemy such as that civilization has never known before--or certainly not since Turks were at walls of Vienna--implacable, resourceful, disciplined, cunning, commanding obedience of people and resources of great and important part of world. Discussion of such an enemy well worth an occasional evening.

II. Transition

Soviet regime now on 4th decade of power.

Has survived many tests.

Civil war and intervention.
One shift of personal power.
Constant series of purges--heavy attrition of ruling personnel.
World War II.

Nevertheless--a certain evolution is observable.

It is not exactly same regime as in beginning.

What are changes?

1. Political personalities who made revolution and carried regime through early stages have been junked. They were intellectuals, brilliant, well-educated, trained to some independence of thought--cruel, but in part regrettfully. Their place taken by tougher, more sinister, secret-police, bureaucrats: trained toautomatic obedience. They make good servants. Can they make good leaders?

2. Enthusiasm gone. Initially, idea was--they would rule by combination of fear and enthusiasm. Now--fear only. And accordingly, state has resorted to that horrible invention of modern totalitarian power, the concentration camp, this literal hell on earth, where men are driven and tortured by the millions not because of individual guilt but in order that others may know that such a hell on earth does exist and may live in fear of it. Such a fearful shadow, falling across lives and thoughts of people, is essential to success of such regime.

3. Increasing

3. Increasing isolation, now carried to fantastic extent. Concommitant of rule by fear. Can this be mark of permanent success.

Do these things indicate stability or instability? Do they reveal Sov. regime as successful experiment, on up and up? Or do they reveal it as having brief half-life--as moving over given course, and already well along it? I would not want to answer this question, but would point out that it is our great and central question. Would recommend you bear it in mind as we turn to somewhat more detailed examination of situation today.

III. Economic

1. During past 4 years Soviet Union has been recuperating from war--has been recuperating, by and large, successfully. In 1948, pre-war gross national product attained. In 1949, pre-war gross national product exceeded 5 to 10 percent. This does not mean all war damage repaired, but lapses are compensated by new construction--general shifts of industry to strategically protected areas. Agricultural production and consumer goods industries, less than before war. Raw materials supply and capital equipment increased.

2. Plans are being currently fulfilled. To be sure, there are shortages and bottlenecks, yet general development continues. This development is very expensive and wasteful. Tremendous cost in human effort and sacrifice. Considerable plundering and wastage of materials. Yet, if people can take it, it's one way of doing things.

3. Where does this put Russia today, in relation to western countries? Lower than you might think.

U.S. gross national income, 1949 - $250 bill.
Soviet " " " " - 65 " (1/4
Eur. Satellites, U.S.S.R. " - 25 "
Atl. Pact countries, without U.S. - 95 "

Commodities, U.S. produced comp. with U.S.S.R. -

4 times as much ingot steel
almost 5 " " " aluminum
6 " " " electric power
8 " " " crude oil

(Same situation prevails in relation to satellite area.) -- and quality makes still further difference.

IV. Military

If this is so, why does Russia rate so high militarily? Why do people worry so? Why do you read in paper that we couldn't possibly hold W.E.?

1. First

1. First reason--ability of Soviet Govt. to devote for higher percentage of gross national product than we do.

   Restricts consumption. Maintains state of semi-mobilization. Despite far greater production of ingot steel and aluminum, for example, more actually devoted to military purposes in Russia than here.

2. Lower cost of defense in U.S.S.R.

   Common soldier probably paid only a small fraction of what U.S. soldier gets. Furthermore, less PX's or juke boxes and other facilities. Question whether liberal democracies--being unable to maintain military standards far removed from civilian living standards, are not pricing themselves out of defense market. We have much more--but Russia is demonstrating that with sufficiently rigid dictatorship you can make little go long way.

3. Disappearance of armed power of Germany and Japan.

4. Presence of Russian forces in heart of Europe.

Result - Russia has land-forces far superior to anything else on Eurasian landmass.

Russia

Russia has probably larger and more effective tactical air force than we. Russia has recently probably succeeded in mastering a number of technological problems which reduce possibilities of use of strategic bombing against her,--radar screen, proximity fuse, jet fighters, etc. Russia has 110 surface Navy to speak of--but no need of one, since she has no sea lanes to protect. She is believed to have dangerously large number of long-range schnorkel submarines. Finally, she presumably now has atomic know-how. Doubtful that she yet has stockpiles or carriers.

Does this mean she will soon resort to war? Probably not. Soviet leaders better aware than some of our people that war is not best means of achieving objectives. Ideology against it, etc. But you never can be absolutely sure. Present withdrawals from U.N. We don't know what they mean. I can conceive of three things that might cause them at any time to resort to war:

1. If they thought we were about to launch attack.
2. If they thought we were seriously re-arming Germans.
3. If they thought alternative was crumbling of their rule in Eastern Europe.

V. Political

V. Political

But assuming they do not wage war, and cold war continues, what are prospects? That question calls, I think, for a word about internal political conditions.

Dictatorship like this cannot be overthrown by popular revolt. On the other hand, everything depends on unity of ruling clique. If they fall out, delicate situations can result, particularly where, as is case with U.S.S.R., lines of their power are far-flung.

Stalin still apparently controlling show but he isn't getting any younger. Question of succession probably cannot be discussed. There have been signs of serious friction and intrigue among his leading henchmen since the war.

1 Politbureau member - Vozenesenski (removed and disappeared, presumably shot)
1 Politbureau member - Zhdanov (died under a cloud, in suspicious circumstances)
1 Politbureau member - Molotov (who for many years figured as Stalin's No. 2 - now recently apparently removed from that position)

All this explicable, since Voznesenski and Zhdanov were known antagonists of Malenkov, and Molotov obviously stood in his way. He seems now to be fair-haired boy. Perhaps he will retain that status. Perhaps he will take over after Stalin. Today that looks probable. But if so, he will have come to power, like Stalin, by most desperate and relentless intrigue. Unless he then proves to have same ruthless genius

genius as Stalin for ruling by fear, by keeping his own council, and by playing his underlings off against each other--great instability may result. We must always remember that totalitarian rule has a tendency to establish a very rigid and imposing superficial crust of power--but to ruin all structure underneath. Destroy that crust and you have chaos.

VI. What do we do about it?

Gentlemen, if you ask me: how do we conduct ourselves in such a way as to assure the destruction of these, our enemies, I can give you no answer. There is certainly no prospect of our accomplishing that objective by military means, no matter how much money we devote to defense. And by means short of war, there is certainly no conceivable blueprint for any early and unfailing success. There is much less we can do by direct action to influence the fortunes of Russian communism than people think. This is the root of much of the misunderstandings about our policies in the Far East. Always remember--we are only merest beginners in the art of propaganda and psychological warfare. The techniques of infiltration and intimidation and subversion are foreign to the democratic state and will, I trust, remain so. Economic or military aid is no infallible device. It depends entirely on circumstances.

That

That does not mean that we should make no efforts to combat Soviet power and influence by direct action. The inability to trace out a plausible and fool-proof blueprint for success is never a reason for failing to continue the struggle in the great contests of human history. Churchill demonstrated this in 1940. We have every right to rely, as he did, on the effects of time, on the fact that our enemies, too, are not only human and therefore fallible--on the fact that none of us sees far enough ahead in this complex world to rule out the unexpected--that none of us, if you will, is enough of a prophet to warrant the degree of certainty implied by an attitude of complete despair and pessimism. So the cold war must go on, as best we can wage it; and we must do what we can, where we can. That means ERP and Atlantic Pact and arms program, and a large defense budget.

But, in my own opinion, there is something else we can do which is even more important. And that is to recognize that communism is not entirely something outside ourselves; that it is something stemming in part from the weaknesses and deficiences of our own society, and feeding in part from those same weaknesses and deficiencies; that we are in a certain way responsible for much of it; and that the answer to it therefore lies to a great degree within ourselves.

What

What I have said to you so far this evening has been said on the basis of observation and experience and intellectual deduction. What I am about to say to you now rests on a profound instinctive conviction, which I would not know how to justify in logical terms. The issue of this great contest between our western world and the Russian communists will probably be determined in the last analysis by the degree of tone and vigor which we are able to impart to our American society and to the relationships in general among the countries of the non-communist world. It will be determined, in other words, less by what we do to the Russians than by what we do to ourselves. This means that we must attempt to solve not just the pleasant problems but above all the unpleasant ones--both international and domestic: the dollar gap problem, the problem of our economic relations with friendly countries, and the bitter domestic problems which we are not always aware of, and when we are aware of them, often prefer not to discuss.

I can offer you, therefore, no easy solution to the problem of Russian-American relations. That problem is as deep and as bitter as the problem of western civilization in general. The problem of the relationship of human freedom and the human spirit to the machine, to the forces of new technology, to the organizational requirements of a complex society. In the failure to solve the problem of this

this adjustment lies the real disease from which we are suffering. The Russian communists are a complication of this disease. I do not dispute the necessity of treating this complication with all the skill at our command. That is, in fact, my profession. But I should view the future darkly if, in our preoccupation with the complication, we neglect the treatment of the disease itself.